



**SB518 - Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment
Testimony before Senate Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs
February 10, 2021
Position: Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Fixsen, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB518** to establish an Office of Climate Change within the Governor's office. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

While we are encouraged by moves that President Biden is taking to combat climate change on a national and global level, it is imperative that states do their part. This bill would establish an Office on Climate Change (OCC) within the governor's office, using the governor's existing funds, as a way to centralize state efforts to combat climate change. The OCC would be tasked with implementing the recommendations of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change to advise the governor and General Assembly on ways to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

This bill would address the criticism of the 2020 report by the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, that it did not include recommendations for concrete action, and that there was no centralized group in the governor's office to coordinate state-wide efforts. This bill will put teeth into the commission's recommendations by requiring the governor's office to work with local governments on development of local plans to combat climate change. Furthermore, the proposed Office on Climate Change would ensure that each state agency considers how they can mitigate the causes and impacts of climate change and would conduct additional research on climate change when necessary.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Elizabeth Fixsen
Savage, MD

Sources:

--Fiscal and Policy Note. Department of Legislative Services, Maryland General Assembly
http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/fnotes/bil_0008/sb0518.pdf

--Bills Would Require State Agencies to Consider Climate Change in Key Decisions and Operations. (3 Feb. 2021) Maryland Matters. <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/02/03/bills-would-require-state-agencies-to-consider-climate-change-in-key-decisions-and-operations/>